

IntegratedEthics[®] Ethical Leadership Activity

Value Based Ethical Leadership: A Theme in the Servant Leadership Model

OVERVIEW

This activity aims to enhance participant's ethical leadership skills by teaching ways to lead through values. By identifying their personal values and how those values align with VA ICARE values, leaders will develop skills consistent with the goals of both ethical leadership and servant leadership. During this interactive session, learners will be introduced to VA's approach to servant leadership and will see how it can be used to support ethical leadership goals. Before the meeting, learners reflect on their personal values and identify where their personal values intersect with VA ICARE values, recording these shared values on a worksheet. At the facilitated meeting, learners then work in small groups, using ethical leadership behaviors as a prompt, to describe tactics or behaviors and actions that would allow them to demonstrate these shared values at work.

Audience: This leadership activity is designed for use in a group setting with facility, VISN and VACO leaders (e.g. quadrad and service line leaders) and with developing leaders or staff workgroups (e.g. VISN LEAD participants, new leader orientation, or HCLDP participants).

Facilitation: The training requires a session facilitator who may be a member of the executive team or other leader or an ethics expert (e.g. IE Program Officer, Ethics Consultation Coordinator, VISN senior lead), or faculty at a formal training program.

Equipment: To hold the session, a meeting room configured for small group discussion that is equipped with a laptop and projector are also needed. If available, a white board or easel with a flip pad can be useful but is not required.

Time required: The exercise is designed to be completed in a 30-minute group discussion with individual prework assigned in advance.

Learning objectives:

At the end of this activity participants will be able to:

- define what it means to be a person of character;
- understand the connections between ethical leadership and servant leadership;
- explain what it means to “engage in value-driven behavior”;
- name a set of values that motivate you at work; and
- describe behaviors and actions that demonstrate these values at work.

Facilitator Guide:

The session facilitator will assist learners in discussing how their personal values translate to their leadership decisions and actions. A good facilitator should be comfortable discussing his or her own personal values, have a good grounding in both ethical leadership and servant leadership strategies, and be able to make connections between audience input and the subject matter.

The facilitator should have a strong understanding of the ICARE values. Participants may not see the connections between their own values and ICARE values. The facilitator should be able to make connections to specific ICARE values and to the broader set of values that ICARE represents. For example, stewardship, duty, and trust can all be tied to the ICARE value of Integrity. The facilitator should be able to make and encourage connections like these.

During the training, the facilitator will:

- use attached slides and supporting handouts to provide brief contextual information,
- give instructions for the activity,
- offer a set of tips for describing behaviors and actions,
- facilitate the group discussion following the group exercise, and
- suggest follow up activities to continue to engage learners in this topic after they leave the session.

To facilitate the prework, the facilitator will:

- distribute handouts and instructions to training attendees, and
- be available to answer questions about the prework.

Possible Pitfalls

Venting: When talking about values alignment it is possible that the conversation will drift into general venting about perceived lack of adherence to VA or personal values. Within a workgroup where staff work regularly together and the issue is a shared experience among the group members, this can be a productive discussion to have, but in a mixed group setting it should be sidelined. An effective way to do this is to acknowledge the comment, say that you are available to discuss it later, and redirect the group back to the next step of the training.

Reaction to Servant Leadership Model: Leaders may see servant leadership as a new model and not want to switch from their previous leadership development model. As evident in the activity, there are many overlaps between ethical leadership and servant leadership. If you encounter this kind of resistance, pay special attention to that connection, and make clear that successful leaders in VA talk about values and lead through those values, no matter what you call it.

Pework:

Before the training, the facilitator should distribute the prework materials: Handouts 1, 2, and 3 (Pework Handouts and Examples of Values and VA ICARE Values). The facilitator should also plan to be available for questions, whether in person, or via email or phone. Pework should not involve much time commitment for the facilitator, perhaps ten minutes to send documents to training attendees via email, or 30 minutes if documents need to be printed and distributed.

Pework should take learners about 30 minutes. It consists of the following steps:

1. Read instructions
2. Identify personal values
3. Identify VA ICARE values that are similar to your personal values

In-person Session Timing:

1. Introduction: 5 minutes
2. Distribute Handout 4, Behaviors and Actions to Demonstrate Values at Work, and Handout 5, Turning Shared Values into Action (this can be done before you begin the session.) Provide prompts for behaviors and actions that can demonstrate values: 3 minutes
3. 3-5 person small group discussion to draft specific strategies for implementing shared values at work: 15 minutes
4. Session feedback and close: 7 minutes

Materials:

1. Slides with speaker's notes
2. Pework Handout 1: Introduction
3. Pework Handout 2: Identifying Your Core Values
4. Pework Handout 3: Examples of Values and VA ICARE Values
5. Handout 4: Behaviors and Actions to Demonstrate Values at Work
6. Handout 5: Turning Shared Values into Actions

Optional follow-up:

At the end of the session, the facilitator may ask group members to plan for a follow-up activity. Follow-up activities help ensure that learners understand how their values and VA ICARE values coincide, and reflect on their ability to engage in value-driven behavior.

In preparation for a follow-up session, the facilitator should ask participants to do all of the following:

1. Participants should complete the group activity on their own to draft at least three specific strategies they can use to demonstrate the values they share with VA.

2. Participants should keep a log to track how often they deploy these strategies over a six-week period.
3. After trying out this practice in their local settings, the small group discussion participants (3-5 individuals) should reconvene as a group in about six weeks by phone or in person to share their successes, lessons learned and recommendations.
4. Leaders should also be encouraged to use this exercise with their own teams and similarly request that staff track follow up actions.

The follow up discussion within the small groups is an opportunity for leaders to learn from each other. Each small group should identify someone to initiate the follow up call and begin the group discussion by sharing their own experience with implementing these strategies.

Pework Handout 1: Introduction

The servant leadership model is a philosophy and a set of practices informed by the insight that leadership must be about service to others—colleagues, employees, customers (or patients), and the community. Servant leaders are people of integrity putting others first, sharing knowledge and power, helping people develop and perform at their best. A servant leadership culture has also been shown in studies to correlate with: employee satisfaction and engagement, collaboration and effectiveness, organizational citizenship behaviors, satisfaction with and influence of supervisors, innovation, communication and trust, and even greater return on investment.

Being a person of character is one of the primary tenets of servant leadership, and is defined by maintaining integrity, demonstrating humility and engaging in value-driven behavior.

Servant leadership is another way to move toward ethical leadership. By leading through our values, we can encourage others to behave ethically and demonstrate our own commitment to ethical behavior. In the upcoming in-person learning session, you will be brainstorming with other participants about ways you can demonstrate value-driven behavior at work. It is easier for most of us to demonstrate values that resonate with us and that we feel are important. In today's prework exercise you will reflect on your personal values and identify the intersection of your personal values and VA ICARE organizational values. It is these intersecting values that you will use during the upcoming in-person session.

Please complete the work described in Handout 2, Identifying Your Core Values, prior to the in-person learning session. This prework should take you less than 30 minutes.

Prewrite Handout 2: Identifying Your Core Values

Your goal in this exercise is to identify your own personal core values, so that you can learn to lead using them in the upcoming in-person session.

Values are a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life; or core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions.

Step 1

The first step is to identify your values:

- Review the first page of Handout 3 for a list of values and definitions (if you need help thinking of specific value labels).
- Reflect on the values that are important to you. How do you describe yourself to others and what are you most proud of?
- How do others describe you?
- Under personal values, write down five or more values that apply to you.

Step 2

The next step is to identify your core values:

- Review your list of values and circle the values that are most important to you – your personal core values
- Write these values (at least 2) in the spaces provided.

Step 3

The final step is to identify consistency between your core values and VA ICARE values:

- Compare your personal core values to VA ICARE values (page 2 of Handout 3).
- Think about the values that you and VA have in common or where there is overlap between your values and broader VA ICARE values.
- Below each core value you have listed, write (in one or two sentences) how that value aligns with one of the VA ICARE values. For instance, if *Justice* is one of your core values you might write that *Justice* is related to *Advocacy*, and these two are exemplified in how you ensure justice for veterans by implementing consistent procedures and reviews to advocate for Veterans' needs. In another example, if your core value is *Charity*, you might say this relates to *Commitment*, that you work diligently to serve Veterans and believe deeply in the service mission of VA to care for those who have borne the battle.
- These are the personal and organizational values that you can most easily demonstrate at work.
- Bring this sheet with you to the in-person portion of the activity.

Pework Handout 2 (Continued): Identifying Your Core Values

Personal Values:

Core Values:

1.

Related VA ICARE value:

2.

Related VA ICARE value:

3.

Related VA ICARE value:

Prewrite Handout 3: Examples of Values and VA ICARE Values

Accountability: Obligation or willingness to accept responsibility
Adaptability: The ability to modify behavior to fit changing situations
Altruism: Unselfish concern for the welfare of others
Charity: Generosity toward others or toward humanity
Collaboration: To work cooperatively especially in a joint intellectual effort
Compassion: Deep awareness of the suffering of others coupled with the wish to relieve it
Confidentiality: Ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access
Conscientiousness: The trait of being painstaking and careful
Consistency: Reliability or uniformity of successive results or events
Cooperation: The willing association and interaction of a group of people to accomplish a goal
Courage: The state or quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face danger, fear, or vicissitudes with confidence and resolution
Courtesy: Civility; consideration for others
Dedication: Selfless devotion of energy or time
Democracy: The principles of social equality and respect for the individual within a community
Duty: A moral or legal obligation
Efficiency: The quality of producing an effect or result with a reasonable degree of effort to energy expended
Empathy: Identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives
Equality: The right of different groups of people to receive the same treatment
Excellence: The state of being good to a high degree
Fairness: Consistent with rules, logic, or ethics
Forgiveness: The willingness to stop blaming or being angry with someone
Generosity: Liberality in giving or willingness to give
Gratitude: Feeling of thankfulness and appreciation
Honesty: Fairness and straightforwardness of conduct
Honor: Principled uprightness of character; personal integrity
Humility: Feeling that you have no special importance that makes you better than others
Integrity: Strict adherence to moral values and principles
Justice: Conformity to moral rightness in action or attitude, distributing goods and treatment fairly and equitably
Liberty: The right and power to act, believe, or express oneself in a manner of one's own choosing
Loyalty: A feeling or attitude of devotion, attachment and affection
Mercy: Forgiveness shown toward someone whom you have the power to punish
Nonmaleficence: Doing no intentional harm
Patience: The ability to accept delay, suffering, or annoyance without complaint or anger
Reliability: Consistent performance upon which you can depend or trust
Resilience: The ability to rebound quickly from misfortune or change
Respect: Polite attitude shown toward someone or something that you consider important
Responsibility: That for which someone is responsible or answerable
Sacrifice: To give up something for something else considered more important
Stewardship: The careful conducting, supervising, or managing of something
Transparency: Openness, communication, and accountability in interpersonal and business interactions
Trust: Assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something
Truth-telling: Telling the truth as opposed to lying

Pework Handout 3 (Continued): Examples of Values and VA ICARE Values

VA ICARE Values

Integrity: Act with high moral principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

Commitment: Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

Advocacy: Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and other beneficiaries.

Respect: Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

Excellence: Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.

Handout 4: Behaviors and Actions to Demonstrate Values at Work

Values are a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life; or core beliefs that guide and motivate attitudes and actions.

Strategies for Demonstrating That Values are Important to You

- a. Talk about values regularly; use value language: *I value transparency, so I often say that it is important to be transparent. For example, I say to staff "I am telling you this because I believe it is important to be transparent..."*
- b. Role model values in how you behave toward others: *I value transparency and therefore I talk openly about the difficulties we have achieving our budgetary objectives.*
- c. Role model values in how you organize the work of leadership (e.g. decision making, communications, recognizing and rewarding staff, establishing expectations, developing new leaders): *I give out a "Cold Hard Facts Award" to a member of my team each year for demonstrating transparency – usually these awards are for bringing unpleasant facts to my attention or the attention of other leaders. I also make organizational decision making transparent by posting the minutes and documents from all decision-making groups at our facility.*
- d. Encourage others to talk about values and value conflicts: *When I meet with my team members I talk to them about being transparent with their staff. We talk about how they demonstrate this value in their interactions with their staff.*

Handout 5: Turning Shared Values into Actions

15 Minutes

Step 1

- Get together in groups of around 3 people and have each participant share his or her list of aligned values (on handout 2).
- As a group, decide which value you will develop together.
- As a group, brainstorm behaviors and actions that could demonstrate this value at work. (Handout 4 summarizes behaviors and actions that can help to demonstrate values. Use these as a jumping off point to think about what you could do if your group needs some ideas to get started.)
- As a group, review your ideas and select one to turn into an action statement to demonstrate values at work.
- As a group, write this action statement.
- Action statements should be specific
 - What action will you take?
 - Where or in what context will you take the action?
 - How will you frame the action for your audience?
 - When or how frequently will you do this?
- Move on to a value shared by another member of the group, and repeat the process, if you have time.

Value to develop:

Behaviors that lead through this value:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Action Statements:

Action: _____

Context or Location: _____

Framing: _____

Frequency: _____

Complete Action Statement: _____

Step 2 (Optional Follow Up)

- Commit to implementing these actions
- Keep a log of when and how you implement these actions: record how you feel, how staff reacted and note ideas for improving your approach.
- Think about your workflow, about how you structure and schedule meetings. Incorporate these actions, and recording and thinking about these actions, into that process.
- Report back to your leadership group on your experience over six weeks with this approach.

SLIDE DECK OUTLINE

Slide 1: Introduction

As you read in the introduction to your prework, servant leadership describes leadership behaviors that improve the leadership environment and organizational health. It is also a model that is explicitly aligned with Integrity, with doing the right thing for the right reasons, and with ethical leadership compass points such as demonstrating that ethics is a priority and communicating clear expectations for ethical practice.

In today's group activity we are going to dive into the servant leadership concept of a *person of character* and leading through values—that is talking about your values, role modeling values in how you behave toward others and how you organize the work of leadership, and encouraging others to talk about values and value conflicts. We are going to use VA ICARE values that resonate with you most closely and brainstorm behaviors, actions, and routine practices that you can use to demonstrate those values at work.

Slide 2: Learning Objectives

Specifically, our goals today are (*read goals*) and at the end of this meeting you should be able to (*read learning objectives*). Achieving these goals and these learning objectives will help us continue to improve our leadership skills, as both servant and ethical leaders, and help bring our values and our ethics into our everyday practice.

The goals of the activity are to:

- Recognize VA ICARE values that are congruent with some of your personal values
- Create tactics to demonstrate these aligned values at work
- Learn ways to lead through your values

And our learning objectives are:

At the end of this activity participants will be able to:

- define what it means to be a person of character;
- understand the connections between ethical leadership and servant leadership;
- explain what it means to “engage in value-driven behavior”;
- name a set of values that motivate you at work; and
- describe behaviors and actions that demonstrate these values at work.

Slide 3: Servant Leadership

The servant leadership model offers ways of connecting personal and VA ICARE values to everyday behaviors in order to offer more effective care for Veterans, another way to address ethical leadership goals. Servant leadership is a philosophy and a set of practices defined by the insight that leadership must be about service to others—colleagues, employees, customers (or patients), and the community.

Servant leaders are people of integrity putting others first, sharing knowledge and power, helping people develop and perform at their best.

Slide 4: VA Servant Leadership Model

Servant Leadership is grouped into 7 pillars, and VA’s model of the concept places these pillars into 3 factors:

The Personal Values factor includes the Person of Character pillar; The Relationships factor includes the pillars: Puts People first, Skilled Communicator, and Compassionate Collaborator; and the Purpose factor includes the pillars of Foresight, Systems Thinker, and Leading with Moral Authority.

Today we’re concerned with the Personal Values factor and Person of Character pillar, namely, how we can work on leading through our values.

Slide 5: Ethical Leadership Behaviors within Servant Leadership

The skills and values expressed through servant leadership reinforce the skills and values of ethical leadership. Here we show some examples of the congruence of the models. (Read out a couple of the paired examples below.) As you can see, the servant leadership pillars reinforce the need to engage in ethical leadership behaviors.

Ethical Leadership Behaviors	Servant Leadership Pillars
<i>I encourage staff to talk to me if they feel pressured to break the rules</i>	Skilled Communicator and Compassionate Collaborator
<i>When staff raise ethical concerns I ask them to say more</i>	Skilled Communicator
<i>I communicate clear expectations for ethical practice</i>	Skilled Communicator and Leading with Moral Authority
<i>When I make important decisions I involve those who will be most affected</i>	Compassionate Collaborator and Leading with Moral Authority
<i>In conversations I invite comments about ethical concerns</i>	Skilled Communicator and Compassionate Collaborator
<i>When staff receive “mixed messages” that create ethical tensions, I take responsibility for clarifying my expectations for ethical practice</i>	Person of Character and Puts People First
<i>When I need advice on an ethical issue, I go to a person with ethics expertise or refer to published resources</i>	Person of Character and Puts People First

Slide 6: Person of Character

The three aspects of a Person of Character are that he or she maintains integrity, demonstrates humility, and engages in value-driven behavior. These are part of VA's focus on Personal Values, and part of Servant Leadership's focus on both the self and the organization.

By focusing on one's personal values, leaders connect with what they value in their work, deriving personal satisfaction, and by engaging in value-driven behavior, they bring those values to improve their organization.

By maintaining integrity, leaders act in a way that is consistent with what they believe, and are also considered ethical and trustworthy by their colleagues.

Today, we will be focusing on being a person of character through engaging in value-driven behavior, reinforcing how being a person of character is built through personal values.

Slide 7: Example: Demonstrating Values at Work (slides numbered 7-10)

Distribute or draw attention to Handout 4, "Behaviors and Actions to Demonstrate Values at Work." This slide is an example of talking about values and using value language. Choose one or two of these "Example" slides before the meeting and delete the others.

Today we will get together in small groups (*or one small group*) and share our core values, and brainstorm ideas for how we can engage in value-driven behavior—how we can lead from our values. Here on screen we have an example of how I would lead from the value of _____ which is an important value to me. Handout 4 contains another example and some suggestions for actions you can take that will help you lead from your values.

Slide 8: Instructions: 15 Minute Group Activity

In the prework, we asked you to identify a series of core values that aligned with VA ICARE values. Let's hear some of those values! Anyone else?

Now, let's get into groups of (three or so) and share your personal values. Then choose one value and brainstorm specific ways to demonstrate this shared value at work, including strategies and action plans. You can refer to Handout 4 for ways to demonstrate your values, and follow the steps outlined on Handout 5. Once you finish with one value, you should start with another value from another group member, if time allows.

Leave this slide up while participants undertake their group work.

Slide 9: Engaging in Value-Driven Behavior

First, ask group members to share a value and the actions that they brainstormed to engage in value-driven behavior. If you have a flip chart available or a white board or a means to capture the ideas in blank slides within this presentation you may want to do

so. You will need someone to assist you in documenting the ideas while you continue to facilitate the discussion. Try to collect three or four ideas from the audience.

Ask questions like the following one to turn the conversation about values and actions back to servant leadership. Finish discussion by asking for any questions.

- The other two aspects of Person of Character are to maintain integrity and demonstrate humility—can leading through our values help us to do both of these as well? How?

Slide 10: Follow Up!

To build on this session, you should plan to complete the following follow up steps: *(read bullet points).*

- Incorporating our work today, draft three specific strategies you can use to demonstrate values that are important to you and to VA.
- Reflect on these strategies for 5 minutes each morning and ask yourself how you can deploy them that day. Make a mental plan.
- Keep a log for six weeks of how often you deploy these strategies.
- After trying out this practice, reconvene with your small group discussion participants in about six weeks by phone or in person to share successes, lessons learned and recommendations.
- Use this exercise with your own team and similarly request that staff track follow up actions—any employee can be a servant leader, it does not require positional authority to be focused on service and improving yourself and those around you.

Slide 11: Questions?

Remember, you can find more tools, job aids, and training on the National Center for Ethics in Health Care Intranet site (vawww.ethics.va.gov/integratedethics). And more information about servant leadership from NCOD at their website.

Thank you all for your time.